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LOUISIANA

Conservationist

Your Window to the Outdoors

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Flyfishing
Drake's
Creek

Inside:
Feral Hogs
Our WMA
System

Dedicated to the conservation and restoration of Louisiana's natural resources.
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Comments

Bryant O. Hammett, Jr., Secretary

Many Louisiana residents and visitors enjoy fishing or boating on the numerous natural or manmade waterways within the state. Some choose to build homes or camps near the water. Unfortunately, several species of invasive aquatic weeds have established a presence around the state, restricting boating, fishing and hunting activities, reducing fisheries productivity, diminishing esthetic values and threatening municipal and agricultural water supplies.

To combat this, the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries' Inland Fisheries Division has budgeted an additional \$3.5

million for aquatic weed control statewide in this fiscal year (which began July 1). The division now has approximately \$5.8 million for controlling aquatic plants, which is more than double the previous budget in fiscal year 2006-07.

The department is also planning a similar commitment to weed control next fiscal year now that Governor Blanco has signed House Bill 919. That very important and timely piece of legislation will divert additional mineral revenue to the department for expanded project work such as weed control.

A significant funding source for the department's aquatic weed program has been the boat trailer registration tax set in place by Act 77 of the 2002 Louisiana Legislature's regular session. That funding has been averaging \$500,000 per year since fiscal year 2003-04. Act 183, an equally important piece of legislation passed during the 2007 regular session, extended this funding source with no sunset provision. To date, these funds have enabled the department to treat over 150,000 acres of nuisance vegetation statewide.

Yet even with those funds, combined in recent years with federal and Conservation Fund dollars to purchase additional herbicides and manpower, LDWF is fighting a problem that is growing exponentially.

The invasive aquatic plants now threatening fresh waterbodies in many parts of the state include hydrilla, common salvinia and giant salvinia. These imports from India and South America were introduced to the United States over the last two decades primarily for use in aquariums and water gardens. Lack of care in the disposal of these plants — and plants moved unknowingly between waterbodies by fishermen and boaters — have led to their spread.

It's a problem Louisiana and other Gulf Coast states will continue to fight for years to come and it would be misleading to state that we will be able to eliminate all aquatic weeds from waterbodies around the state. Controlling the spread of nuisance aquatic vegetation is a more realistic goal.

Drawdowns are an effective method of controlling many species of aquatic plants. Some species are very susceptible to drawdowns, but others, such as hydrilla, require multiple, successive drawdowns to be effective. And drawdowns are most effective when accompanied by cold winters, which this state has not had for the last several years.

Inland Fisheries is pursuing alternative treatment options to chemical spraying, the effectiveness of which can be affected by wind, water currents and rainfall levels. The salvinia weevil, for example, is seen as a very promising method of control for giant and common salvinia. But obtaining the weed predator in quantities sufficient to contain the threat is the challenge now. Controlling the spread of aquatic weed by a combination of methods will be the focus in the years ahead.

All outdoorsmen who use our state waterways can have a role in this control effort. At the end of each day on the water, once your boat is back on the trailer, take the time to remove any aquatic vegetation that may have come ashore attached to your trailer, vessel or motor. Dispose of it on land and do not return it to the water. Aquatic weeds have moved about the state, in many instances, aboard vessels trailered from one water body to another. Weed removal is a simple step to add to your boating routine at the end of the day and it can make a difference.

There is a great deal of work to do on this problem statewide and LDWF, working with other state and federal agencies, will continue to develop appropriate solutions.



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Drake's Creek Catch *By Pete Cooper Jr.*
Bobcat (*Lynx rufus*) LDWF File Photo



Story and photos by
PeteCOOPER JR

I fell in love again last year. Talk about pretty. A good shape, too. I must admit, a bit “easier” than some of my past loves. But in this case that just made it all a little better. And I must thank Keith Cascio for introducing us.

Got y'all's minds totally discombobulated by now?

In explanation, Keith is the coordinator of the Louisiana Natural and Scenic Rivers System. He first invited me to "survey and random sample" one of his wards a decade or so ago – me being quite fond of that genre of waterways throughout my life – and since then we have become good friends. We've also "surveyed and random sampled" several other streams that are included within the system – oh, that term is scientific jargon that we take the liberty to loosely interpret as "prospect by fly fishing." Something like that, anyway.

Whatever, one day last summer Keith rang my phone, proclaiming another stream, Drake's Creek in Vernon Parish, had been nominated for inclusion within the system. He therefore had to go survey it (literally) to get an idea of its personality. We arrived at

our first bridge-crossing around 8 a.m., and it was definitely love at first sight!

Right off the bat my initial "sample" produced a nice-sized longear sunfish that was colored more vividly than any other I have ever taken anywhere in four states. Then to seduce me even further, not five minutes later my efforts were rewarded with a chunky spotted bass that anyone would have been proud of. This was only the first place sampled on our initial trip to the creek.

One thing, though, about creek-fishing, whether it's done with flies or conventionally, is no matter if you are a seasoned "creekmeister" or not, it will probably take a couple of trips to adequately familiarize yourself with the proper hows and wheres to fish them. In our case, we had to survey as many crossings as we could, so that prevented us from doing thorough random sampling at any one spot. In other

Drake's Creek is a meandering, pristine jewel that lies almost entirely within Kisatchie National Forest.



words, we didn't catch many more fish.

However, that first date warranted a quick second, and a third, and then a fourth – all of those being alone with my new love – and by the end of the fourth trip I was head over heels

Drake's Creek is definitely pretty, though rather short, with almost all of it lying within the Kisatchie National Forest in south-central Vernon Parish. Its corridor is therefore quite pristine. Over a straight-line distance of about 16 miles it falls from an elevation of roughly 300 feet at what appears to be its headwaters to around 150 feet at its confluence with the Whiskey Chitto. It is apparently a rather young stream with much meandering of its channel almost back upon itself. Using a rough

Drake's Creek will reward the persistent fly angler with peaceful surroundings and feisty fish.



formula to add in those meanders to the stream's course-length calculates a healthy gradient of approximately 5 1/2 feet per mile. And that generates a right pleasant amount of current! So although its bottom is covered with a thin layer of silt in some of the slow-water spots, firm sand and pea-gravel comprise most of its substrate. During the semi-draught times that I fished the stream last summer, I found the water to be a bit less than perfectly clear, but plenty clear enough.

It also apparently has a respectable population of spotted bass, and besides that, gorgeous longear sunfish, I have taken several other longears (a.k.a. pumpkinseeds) that were similar in size though a bit less spectacular, a few bluegills and a green sunfish. I have also caught largemouth bass from it, though I wish I hadn't.

Being rather small compared to other streams that I have described in these pages, Drake's Creek is not easy to fish. Here, as in any other water of this type, you cannot let the bass know of your presence and still expect to catch them. The stream's tight quarters make that a tough chore, but with stealthy approaches to likely spots, it can be done; a camouflage shirt – like what I began wearing after the trip with Keith – helps accomplish that. Eddies, the backs of turns, and washouts below mid-channel snags are good targets and are always best when shaded. Fact is, as on any other creek, fishing sunlit water is most often a total waste of time.

Although it's usually best to fish such waters while moving upstream, eventually you may encounter a blow-down or deep spot that will prevent any further movement in that direction. In this event, downstream fishing, proclaimed a creek-fishing "no-no" in many circles, is your only option other than driving to another crossing. However, it can be productive if you are very cautious, as it gives you a different look at the promising spots. Keep a low profile; walk along the edge of

the water if possible (not in it), and take your time. Also, make that first cast count. Subsequent downstream casts to the same spot can disturb the water enough to alert the bass that something isn't quite right.

While I doubt I'd be very far wrong in believing that the greatest part of the diet of the spotted bass inhabiting this stream consists of crawfish, which are most often found on bottom, I stoically choose to entice them with fly-rod poppers, which float. This is entirely a matter of personal preference, but it is derived from experiences on similar waters that led to the loss of *a lot* of sub-surface lures and flies to the abundant benthic "structure" that is commonly found in such waters. Besides, during early autumn the fish seem to keep at least one eye on the surface, just in case a small frog or terrestrial happens to come along. If you fish conventionally, a small topwater like a Tiny Torpedo is a good choice, as is a 1/8-ounce spinnerbait with a soft-plastic grub for a tail rather than a skirt. Fly fishermen should rely on size 6 feather-tailed poppers, nothing smaller.

Poppers, incidentally, seem to be made to order for a form of structure that I have found in this stream a few times. It is debris — leaves, twigs, and such — that has accumulated in a patch of foamy water on the up-current side of a blow-down. Apparently the bass have become conditioned that prey — bugs and stuff — also accumulate in the foam. Cast your popper just upstream of such a spot, allow the current to drift it into the foam, and then give it a few easy twitches, ensuring that it doesn't drift into the blow-down. The strikes you will generate by doing so are definitely entertaining!

Besides being a very "scenic" stream with good angling potential, Drake's Creek offers a perk that is found in few others like it — the "easy" part of its personality. Across its rather short course-length are five access points: two south of La. Hwy. 10, the highway itself, and two north of it. Purchase

your parish road-map (Vernon Parish, South Section) by visiting the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development Web site at www.dotd.louisiana.gov, then clicking on "Maps" and following the steps. Once you receive it, trace the stream's course with a blue felt-tip pen, and that will plainly show the locations of the bridges of the various roads that cross it.

The benefit of this relative ease of access is twofold. First, if the action at one crossing is a bit too slow for you, then another spot is quite near. Second, if you happen to find competition at one crossing, you can again make the short run to another. Of course, during autumn you seldom find any fishing competition on waters like Drake's Creek. That makes the first month or so of this season a fine time to do some surveying and random sampling on it. I am rather disappointed that the Legislature did not vote on the proposal to include Drake's Creek within the Scenic Rivers System last summer. However, the nomination is still there, and I can see no reason why the stream would be denied its rightful place therein. For sure, anything so pretty, shapely, and alluring should be given all the TLC that it's due! 

Pete Cooper Jr. is the author of Flyfishing the Louisiana Coast. He is a member of the Louisiana Sportsman's Hall of Fame and is a regular contributor to Louisiana Conservationist.

WILD HOGS

the good, the bad and the ugly

Story by
N.J.Stafford III

Pigs, "piney woods rooters," "poor man's grizzly," "razor backs," "feral hogs" or whichever name one chooses, Louisiana's wild hog population is exploding! Based on reports from LDWF biologists, wild hogs now occur in virtually every parish. These wild porkers hail from myriad sources. In recent years those interested in their proliferation have even introduced European and Russian hogs into the wilds of Louisiana. The young of these "old world" wild pigs are easily distinguishable by brown horizontal striping.

During a petition in 1957 for a historic "Choctaw Trail" marker in Washington Parish, two of the elderly petitioners, Wes Knight (84) and M. John Alford (93) reported the wild hogs present in the area were descendants of those brought over by DeSoto (courtesy of the Louisiana State Archives). This belief is common across much of the coastal southeast region of the United States. However, most can likely trace their lineage back to domestic swine released into the wild in the 1800s and mid-to-early 1900s. These hogs would often be "ear marked" then released to grow fat on nature's bounty for a period of time. Months later at the appropriate time, they would then be rounded up for harvest. Some hogs would be spared

to remain in the wild to make more pigs for future round ups. Female hogs capable of having two litters per year of up to a dozen young quickly filled the forest with pork. These new residents with an affinity for swamp-land had no significant natural predators and their proliferation in many areas went unchecked. Today the ever-expanding population of wild or "feral" descendants is scattered across much of the state. Like opinions on Louisiana's infamous Governor Huey Long, people either "love 'em or hate 'em." Often, these opinions are formed from each particular person's personal hog experiences. As an avid hog hunter, and wildlife biologist, the following are some of my own personal hog encounters.

the good

I will never forget the thrill of harvesting my first 200-plus-pound tusker in the marshes of the Pearl River Wildlife Management Area. Hogs were present back then but not as common as today. That particular evening, I waited until the quiet of sunset to make my approach by pirogue into his lair. Just minutes before the end of legal shooting hours, a huge black figure ambled out of the tall Roseau canes onto the banks of the narrow bayou that I was paddling down. Even though the big



LDWF file photo

Feral hogs can adapt to a multitude of habitat types.

black silhouette was only 75 yards away I would not shoot. Why? Because I knew that a bear of similar size had been sighted only a couple of miles away and I was surely not going to accidentally shoot one of the last black bears in the Pearl River swamp. After a couple of minutes of study through my scope, I saw his huge white tusks protruding from the side of his snout. Instantly, my 30:06 rifle found its mark. When I paddle up to the downed giant, I was amazed at its huge size then feared that it was too big to move. As light faded, I emptied my pirogue and brought it to the hog. Cradling it under the hogs back, I then rolled the beast into my ride and, after great effort, managed to shove the entire rig back into the bayou. My next feat was to navigate over 400 pounds of passenger and cargo to my truck. With only one inch of free board on each side of my pirogue it was a slow and prayerful process back to the landing. Once at the truck my challenges were still not over. Getting Mr. Mega Hog into the bed of my truck with my muscle power alone proved to be physically impossible, and help was nowhere in sight. About that time my MacGyver instincts kicked in and I unhooked my tail gate, looped my winch cable over the cab, and around the hog, then winched Hogzilla Jr. into the bed of the truck

without breaking a sweat. From that point on I was hooked on the sport of hunting wild hogs.

the bad

Since that first kill I have crossed paths with hundreds of wild hogs. It has been my experience that 99 out of 100 hogs that encounter humans will flee post haste. The exception being one cornered, injured or just plain bad. One fall while squirrel hunting with my young son David, I found one such bad boy deep in the Honey Island swamp. It all started as we quietly paddled a pirogue along a slough where I had taken many hogs

Hogs' voracious appetites can decimate crops and render game feeders useless for any other species.



Photo by N.J. Stafford



Photo by Christian Winslow

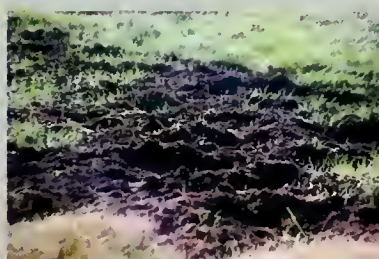


Photo by N.J. Stafford

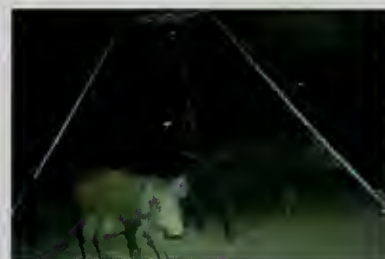


Photo by Christian Winslow

before. David sitting in front first spied the "pig" as it lay down. We stealthily approached to within 25 yards where I then could see about a two-foot long portion of the animal's side. Based on what I could see of the pig, it appeared to be about an 80 pounder. Young David had never harvested a hog and pleaded for permission to shoot. I maneuvered the pirogue's bow against the bank and instructed my son to fire his .22 rifle into the side of the resting hog. After what seemed like forever he fired into the pig located to our 11 o'clock position. Much to my surprise it stood up immediately after being hit. What I thought was an 80 pounder turned out to be over 200 pounds and had 90 percent of another hunter's arrow sticking straight up out of its back. For an instant my thoughts harkened to Moby Dick, Captain Ahab and harpoons. I then quickly returned to reality and fired my trusty .22 into its vitals to end the ordeal. After absorbing my direct hit, the beast did a 180 and took another round from David before his gun jammed. By now the situation was getting uncomfortable for all parties involved. Again a 180 and I placed another bullet into the vitals with again no effect. At this point Mr. Invincible faced us and glared directly at me with that "I'm going to run you through" look. He then

Feral hogs are non-natives that compete for resources with native species. LDWF rules allow licensed hunters to take unmarked hogs year round during legal shooting hours. Check with local law enforcement before taking hogs.

charged us like some African big game determined to make mince meat out of some poor Englishman wearing a funny looking hat. The situation quickly went from uncomfortable to critical as I began rapidly firing past my son's left shoulder at the oncoming pork freight train. The charging boar was able to cover the 25 yards to our pirogue in under four seconds. Sideswiping our boat, thankfully, the enraged hog focused his wrath on me at the back of the boat, as a simple leftward sweep of his tusks could have seriously injured my son. To get to me it made one last lunge into deeper waters where at point blank range shot number 12 found its mark. Like a sinking pirate ship's mast, the arrow in the hogs back slowly drifted beneath the surface of the water. It was so close that from my seat I reached in and held the arrow fletching for at least a minute or two to make sure that like in some horror movies it was not coming out of the water to wreck havoc again. From this day on I well understood the term "poor man's grizzly."

the ugly

For years I considered the wild hog as another manifestation of Louisiana's lagniappe. Excellent table fare, an archer's dream, and a dog hunter's ultimate challenge. Unfortunately, experience would show me the dark side of the story. History has taught us that nearly every time that a non-native species is released into a habitat where it does not occur, problems follow. Does anyone remember water hyacinth? It has a beautiful purple flower, but now many of our lakes are no longer navigable due to floating masses of this plant. What about nutria? Once an economic boon for Louisiana's fur industry, now acres of marsh are destroyed each year due to their high productivity and voracious appetite for marsh grasses. The list of non-native species problems goes on and on. As a biologist, having dealt



Photo by N.J. Stafford



LDWF file photo

with the issue of feral hogs for some 25 years, let me tell you a little about the ugly side of Louisiana's hog population.

I first noticed their serious negative impact on native wildlife in 1984 on the Pearl River Wildlife Management Area. It was October, and the swamp cow oaks were dropping their best crop of acorns in years. You could hardly walk under the oaks for fear of twisting an ankle on the pecan-sized acorns. There were literally thousands of pounds of acorns strewn across the forest floor. I thought surely the deer, wild turkeys, raccoons and squirrels would be maintained, fat and happy throughout the winter. This acorn bonanza also attracted the hogs and I managed to take a nice one with my bow and arrow. Returning to the site one month later to scout for the upcoming deer season, I found the entire section of woods completely devoid of acorns. It was as if they had evaporated. Upon closer inspection I found a network of hog trails and rooting under every oak tree that I walked to. Acorns that in past years would have lasted months to feed wildlife were gone. Hog numbers had increased underneath my

radar to an unacceptable level. It was well past time for direct action. Today much of the state, like many states in the South, is behind the eight ball in efforts to curtail the ever-expanding hog population. This problem is greatly exacerbated by those that violate the law, by regularly relocating and releasing into unfenced wilds, these 200-pound demons of destruction. Today many hunting clubs and private landowners can no longer plant food plots for native wildlife species due to hog depredation. Even on some WMAs, hogs are responsible for destroying acres of chufa, wheat, corn and millet. They also have rooted up thousands of young trees planted for wildlife on both public and private lands within the state. Even if you don't plant food plots or trees but feed deer, you can be victimized by hogs. Biologist Christian Winslow documented a group of wild hogs consuming over 100 pounds of rice bran and corn in just over three hours in St. Bernard parish last fall. In addition to wildlife feeds and plantings, hogs destroy thousands of dollars each year in Louisiana's agricultural crop.

At the 2006 National Conference on

Wild Pigs held in Alabama and attended by LDWF Biologist Mike Perot, researchers from Texas reported that the average economic loss incurred per incident by farmers and ranchers in a 2003 study was \$7,515. Researchers from Alabama also reported at the conference that hogs can have a negative impact on a variety of reptiles and amphibians as well as the bog habitats they reside in. Not to be left out, LSU researchers reported, in a study conducted in western Louisiana, that pig activity substantially increased waterborne bacteria, notably *E. coli*, resulting in a variety of negative impacts to native species using these same waters. They can even harbor a variety of diseases such as pseudo rabies, swine influenza, trichinosis, porcine circovirus, toxoplasmosis, porcine parvovirus or brucellosis.

The best advice to landowners is to never allow them to get a foot hold on your land to start with. If, like me, you are already dealing with their destructive behavior, declare full-scale war on them. This is one instance when the unrestrictive removal of every individual hog possible is the best wildlife conservation medicine. One should employ every method available. Hunting is the obvious and offers the most recreational opportunity. Still-hunting hogs can be done 365 days a year and is the most common control method. However an ever-increasing number of "hog dog" hunters are honing their skills in Louisiana. Many employ both chase "bay" and "catch" dogs to remove problem hogs. Recently a special hog dog hunting season was opened on the Pearl River and Red River WMAs to control hog numbers. On Pearl River WMA alone these highly efficient hunters to date have harvested 315 hogs. At each WMA hunters are required to dispatch the hogs on site to ensure that they don't later turn up causing problems somewhere else. Trapping is also effectively used in many areas to

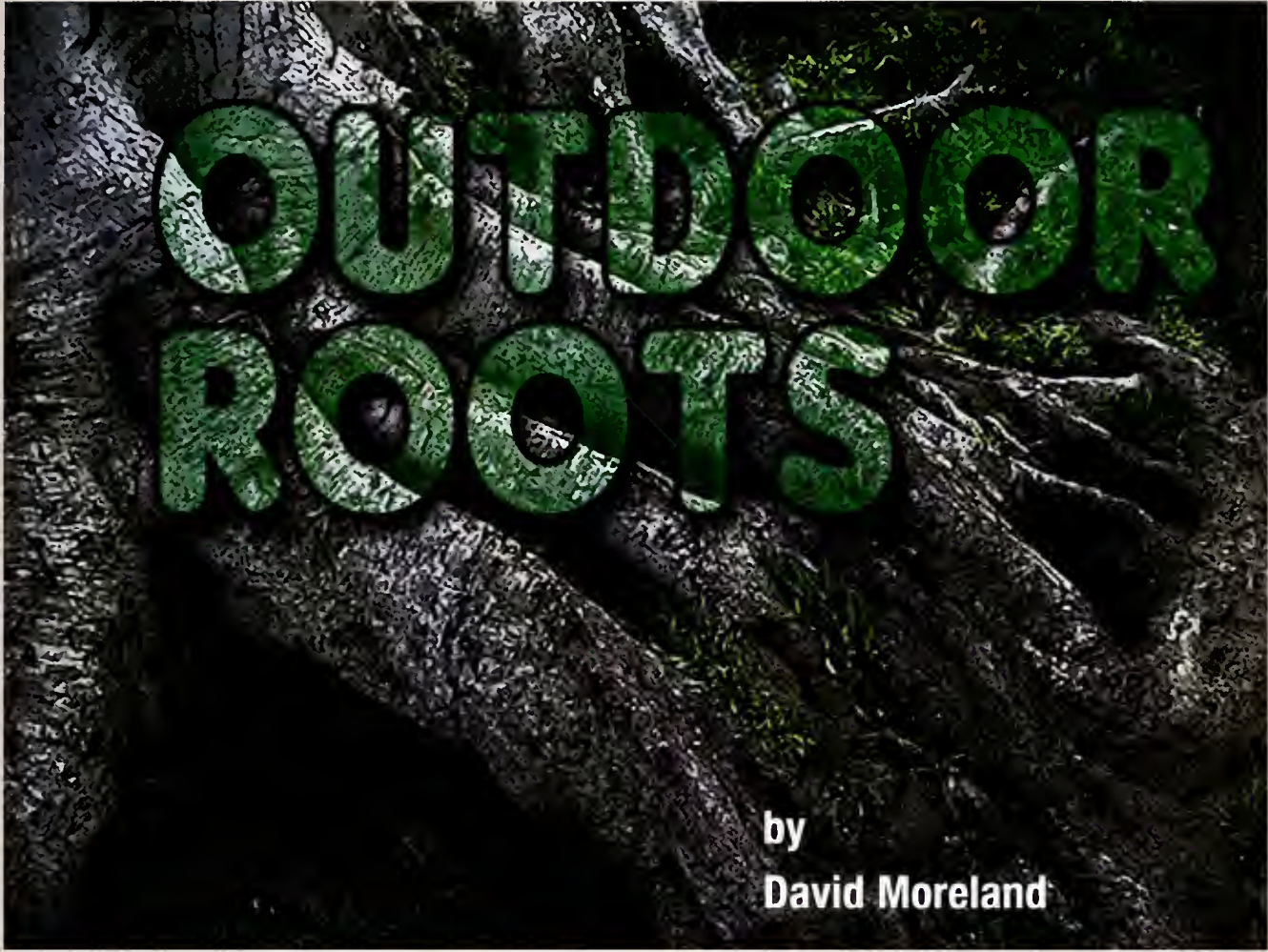
reduce hog numbers.

Any number of trap door cage traps, corral traps, or even snares can be used successfully on private lands. Soured corn is most often used as bait. Regardless of the control method used, hog numbers must be aggressively kept in check to insure that native plants and animals are not seriously impacted.

Title 56:20B of the Louisiana Revised Statutes states, "No wild animal or fowl of any species shall be transported for restocking purposes from a site within the state to any other site within the state except in accordance with rules and regulations by the commission." The department currently is working with the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry to reduce hog depredation.

For more information on controlling hog numbers contact a biologist at your nearest Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries regional office. 🐾

N.J. Stafford has worked for the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries for 25 years. He is currently a biologist supervisor in Region 7 and is an occasional contributor to Louisiana Conservationist.



OUTDOOR ROOTS

by

David Moreland

Looking Back and Moving Forward

No doubt the highlight of my wildlife career was the 13 years that I spent as the state's deer program biologist. The white-tailed deer is the most pursued game animal in the United States. Managing any wildlife species can be both challenging and frustrating, but white-tails can be especially difficult. Results of applied deer management work may not become evident for several years. Even then there are many uncontrollable factors that can affect and impact the management work. Changing habitat conditions, weather, population dynamics and human influences all play a part in determining success. Needless to say, the Louisiana deer program is a work in progress.



Photo provided by David Moreland

**Louis Brunett
researched Louisiana's
deer herds and their
habitats.**

I was fortunate during my career to have been able to work with the first generation of biologists who began the deer program. These veteran biologists initiated the deer restocking and subsequent hunting and management programs. One of these veterans was Louis Brunett. Louis served as the deer habitat program biologist during these early years and later in his career became the WMA development and maintenance program biologist. Much of the deer research and management work that Louis was involved with was done in the mixed pine/hardwood forests of central Louisiana. In a report that Louis prepared concerning habitat management, he predicted that this habitat type would become more important for deer than the bottom-land hardwood forests.

Louis conducted numerous deer range studies and surveys on the US Forest Service Red Dirt Refuge. This area, now known as the National Red Dirt Wildlife Management Preserve, was one of the original Wildlife and Fisheries Game Management Areas that opened for public deer hunting in the '50s. As a refuge area Red Dirt provided deer for the statewide restocking program. Today, Red Dirt is managed under the watchful eye of the US Forest

Service with assistance from LDWF.

The browse surveys conducted on Red Dirt in the early years revealed a high deer population, which is one reason it was important for trapping and restocking. The survey technique that Louis and others used was the Aldous Browse Survey, named after the man who designed it, Sholar Aldous. This technique was actually designed to measure deer browsing in the "wintering yards" of the northern states. It did have application on areas with high deer populations in the south such as Red Dirt. In later years Louisiana biologists adopted a browse transect method for surveying deer habitat.

I gleaned much from the expertise and knowledge of Louis as I began studying and documenting browse plants on Pearl River WMA. Louis was always ready and available with encouragement and assistance to us third generation biologists. As the deer program biologist, I developed a browse transect survey based upon the work of deer managers and researchers such as Louis. This transect technique has proven to be effective in monitoring habitat conditions and developing harvest strategies to improve or maintain proper habitat conditions for deer.

Scott Durham, the current deer program biologist, has been utilizing the latest survey technique, digital sensor cameras at bait sites, to estimate the deer population on an area. I used sensor cameras in the early '90s to monitor mineral sites and scrapes. These cameras used 35mm film and required a few days before one learned what deer, or other creatures, had visited the study site. Today's surveillance units utilizing digital cameras can be downloaded in the field for instant recognition and documentation of visits. Scott is also incorporating the browse transect survey along with the camera work for further documentation of herd and habitat conditions. The combination of the two surveys along with physical data from the deer season and herd health checks, provides excellent

information for making proper management decisions.

Louis was involved with the deer tagging program that was initiated in the '60s. Unfortunately it did not produce the desired results that were expected. Today, tagging is again part of the deer management program, but with modern technology such as the Point-of-Sale License Program, the inter-

net and wireless communication, better results are anticipated once the program design is complete and working correctly.

The 2006-07 Hunting Season initiated the concept of deer tagging and harvest reporting. Information that Scott compiled from the deer harvest cards shows that the ten parishes with the highest deer kill are all in the mixed pine/hardwood habitat region of northwest and central Louisiana. In fact 15 of the top 25 parishes having the highest deer kill occur in this habitat type. Louis' prediction came true, it only took 40 years of management work to document it. As the deer program moves forward into the 21st century only time will tell what these new program changes will produce for Louisiana deer hunters.

David Moreland is a former biologist and administrator for the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries and is a frequent contributor to Louisiana Conservationist.



Photo provided by David Moreland

The task of heading LDWF's deer research has been passed to Scott Durham, left.

Editor's note:

After more than 30 years of service to Louisiana hunters, conservationists and outdoors enthusiasts, Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Wildlife Division Administrator David Moreland retired Sept. 7, 2007.

Moreland's career started with LDWF in 1976 when he accepted a District 7 game biologist position. In 1978, Moreland was promoted to District 7 Wildlife Supervisor. From 1992 to 2004, Moreland served as the state's deer program manager, and in July 2004, Moreland became LDWF's Wildlife Division administrator. In this position, Moreland managed more than 100 employees statewide and handled the administrative coordination of the statewide hunting on WMAs, and of notable species such as white-tailed deer, Eastern wild turkey, waterfowl and upland game.

Moreland will continue to be a part of Louisiana Conservationist with this column, "Outdoor Roots," where he will share stories and experiences from his lifetime of work in Louisiana's outdoors.

This Land *is* Your Land

Wildlife Management Areas Provide a Variety of Public Hunting Access Opportunities

Story by
BoBOEHRINGER

Outdoor recreation can be costly for hunters in areas where access to hunting grounds is limited by privately or commercially owned land. In some areas of the country, leasing property for recreational game hunting or paying for day hunts on private property is often the only option.

Louisiana hunters, and visitors to the state during hunting season, have the option of hunting on thousands of acres of locally-owned, state-owned or leased land between September and May each year.

The Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) operates one of the best and most extensive Wildlife Management Area (WMA) systems in the southeastern United States, managing 55 WMAs with 1.3 million acres of land. These WMAs are maintained for hunting and fishing activities, as well as outdoor recreation including camping, hiking and bird watching.

The department owns 38 WMAs totaling nearly 750,000 acres and leases another 521,000 acres from private landowners, creating another nine WMAs for public use. An additional eight WMAs are leased from other public agencies.

Resident game including squirrel, rabbit, deer and quail can be hunted on state WMAs within the seasonal dates set by the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission (LWFC). Migratory game bird hunting options are also provided within the WMA system based on guidelines set by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and dates approved by the LWFC. Snipe, woodcock, ducks, teal, coots, geese,



rails and gallinules are species options for hunters, as well as native and migratory dove. The choices are many and specific regulations per species can be found on the LDWF Web site (www.wlf.louisiana.gov) and within departmental publications.

"The variety of habitat and game harvested is what makes our WMA

system so special," said Jimmy Anthony, Wildlife Division administrator. "From the earliest dove hunting in September to the spring squirrel hunts in May, hunters in this state can pick their terrain and species and have success."

Most Louisiana residents are less than an hour away from a nearby

Private land access provided by no cost lease arrangements or cooperative agreements:

OWNER	WMA	ACRES
Biloxi Marsh Land Corporation	Biloxi	42,787
Edward Wisner Foundation	Wisner	16,837
Forest Capital Partners, LLC	Clear Creek	55,672
Forest Capital Partners, LLC	Sabine	7,554
Forest Capital Partners, LLC	West Bay	36,039
Forest Investment Associates	West Bay	7,024
Joyce Foundation	Joyce	851
Plum Creek Timber Company	Union	11,192
Resource Management	Little River	887
Roy O. Martin Lumber Co., LLC	West Bay	16,937
Strategic Timber Partners	Sabine Island	592
Thistlethwaite Heirs	Thistlethwaite WMA	11,100
Weyerhaeuser Company, Inc.	Bens Creek	13,044
Weyerhaeuser Company, Inc.	Jackson-Bienville	32,185
Total		252,701

Local, state and federal entities with acreage in the WMA program:

Caddo Levee District	Soda Lake	1,300
Calcasieu Parish School Board	Sabine Island	960
La. Dept. of Agriculture and Forestry	Alexander State Forest	7,875
La. National Guard	Camp Beauregard	12,500
State Land Office	Atchafalaya Delta	141,912
State Land Office	Attakapas	25,730
State Land Office	Loggy Bayou	159
State Land Office	Sabine Island	7,143
State Land Office	Three Rivers	835
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers	Attakapas	2,200
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers	Bodcau	34,355
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers	Loggy Bayou	2,138
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers	Red River	11,717
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers	Sherburne	17,000
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers	Soda Lake	1,200
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers	Three Rivers	1,085
U.S. Army	Peason Ridge	33,010
U.S. Army/U.S. Forest Service	Fort Polk	105,545
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	Sherburne	15,220
Tangipahoa Parish School Board	Joyce	484
Tangipahoa Parish School Board	Sandy Hollow	181
Tangipahoa Parish School Board	Tangipahoa Parish Sch.Bd.	1,643
Total:		424,192

Opposite page, Joyce WMA near Hammond is home to a swamp walk, an elevated boardwalk that gives visitors a peek into this large area of coastal wetlands and coastal forest.

Sandy Hollow WMA in Tangipahoa Parish is primarily managed for upland game birds, such as quail and dove. LDWF also uses the area to conduct habitat, game and non-game studies.



WMA presenting an outdoor opportunity throughout the hunting season.

If dove hunting is your specialty, WMAs with very good habitat for attracting birds include Bayou Pierre (Red River Parish), Big Colewa (West Carroll Parish), Bodcau (Bossier Parish), Boeuf (Caldwell Parish), Buckhorn (Tensas Parish), Camp Beauregard (Rapides Parish), Elbow Slough (Rapides Parish), Ouachita (Ouachita Parish), Red River

(Concordia Parish), Sandy Hollow (Tangipahoa Parish) and Sherburne (Iberville, Pointe Coupee, St. Martin parishes).

Squirrel and rabbit can be found on nearly all WMAs statewide, but those best known for large numbers include Attakapas Island (St. Martin, St. Mary parishes), Big Lake WMA (Franklin, Madison parishes), Boeuf (Caldwell Parish), Buckhorn (Tensas Parish), Camp Beauregard (Rapides Parish),

No Cost Lease Arrangements, Cooperative Agreements Benefit Outdoor Enthusiasts In Louisiana

In addition to purchasing land for the Wildlife Management Area program, the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) leases land or maintains cooperative agreements for public access to land at no cost to the department. The public benefits by gaining access to additional acreage for outdoor recreation and landowners receive the benefit of land management expertise provided by LDWF.

In southwest Louisiana for example, LDWF owns very little land, but leases 256,248 acres. Timber companies including Forest Capital Partners, Forest Investment Associates, Strategic Timber Partners and Roy O. Martin Lumber Company provide access to select acreage in Allen, Calcasieu, Sabine and Vernon parishes. In that same part of the state, cooperative agreements with the U.S. Forest Service, the U.S. Army, the Calcasieu Parish School Board and the State of Louisiana Land Office add thousands more to the WMA inventory.

Elsewhere around the state, LDWF has over the years worked with other private landowners and governmental entities to the same end, increased public access. Additional to the hunting opportunities, state WMAs are available for a wide variety of outdoor activities including fishing, hiking, bird watching and nature photography. Seasonal hunting dates and details on the variety of outdoor events scheduled at state WMAs can be found on the LDWF Web site - www.wlf.louisiana.gov.

Dewey Wills (LaSalle Parish), Red River (Concordia Parish), Sherburne WMA (Iberville, Pointe Coupee, St. Martin parishes), Spring Bayou (Avoyelles Parish), Three Rivers (Concordia Parish), Thistlewaite (St. Landry Parish). Along the coast, Pointe Aux Chenes (Lafourche, Terrebonne parishes) has a large rabbit population as well.

Deer are the most popular species pursued by hunters in Louisiana as evidenced by resident Big Game license sales. Those had climbed back to pre-Katrina/Rita levels with over 135,000 sold in the 2006-07 license year. Sound habitat management on private and public lands, and the resulting improved stability and quality of the state's deer population has made a difference.

Among the WMAs noted for deer harvest size and/or quantity, regional managers recommend Clear Creek (Vernon Parish), Dewey Wills (Catahoula, LaSalle parishes), Loggy Bayou (Bossier Parish), Union (Union Parish), Red River/ Three Rivers (Concordia Parish), Russell Sage (Ouachita Parish), Sherburne (Iberville, Pointe Coupee, St. Martin parishes) and Thistlewaite (St. Landry Parish).

Although restricted for primitive weapons only, deer hunters can experience some of the most unique terrain in the state within the boundaries of Tunica Hills WMA (West Feliciana Parish).

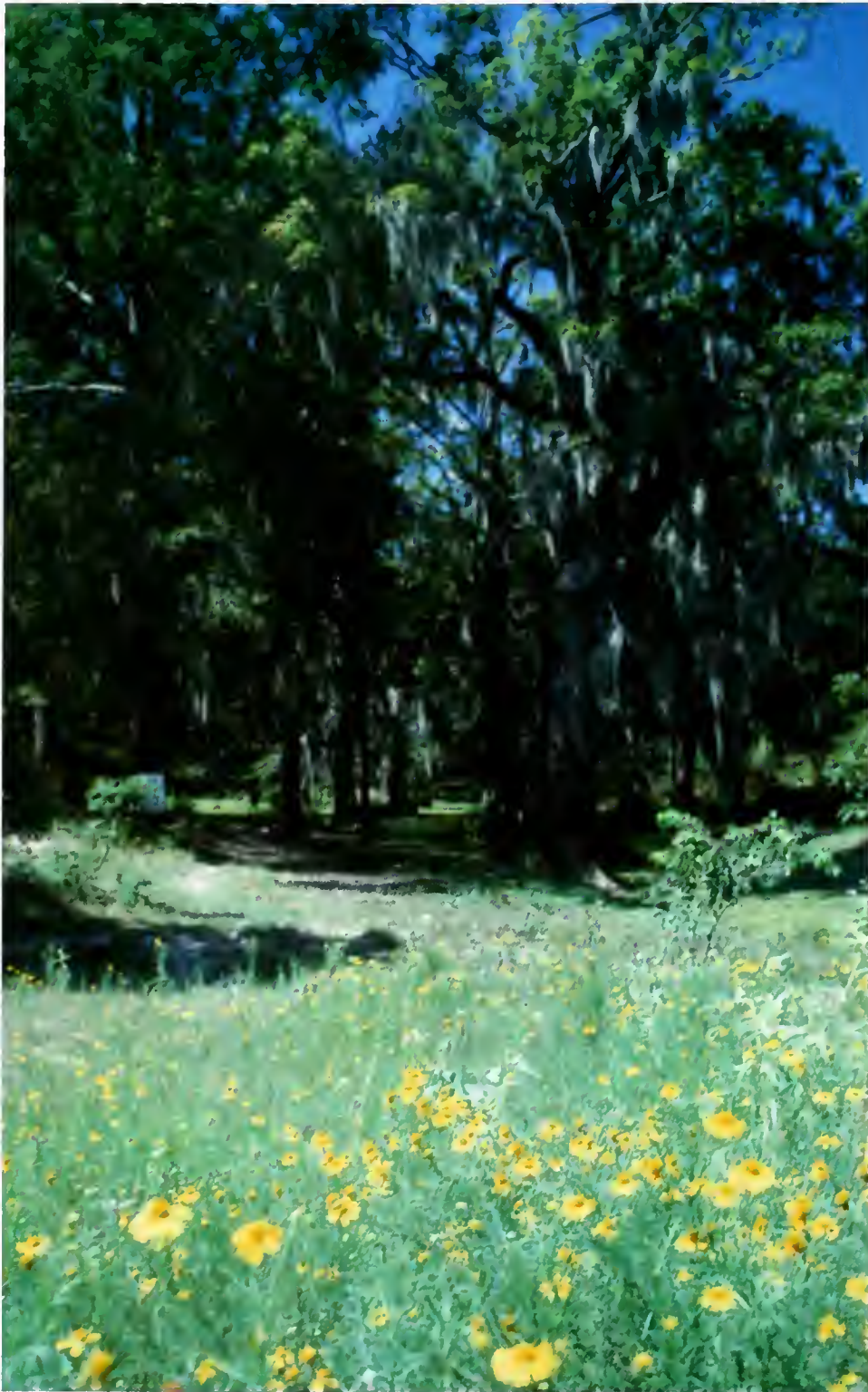
Waterfowl habitat on WMA properties offers duck and goose hunting access to productive acreage both along the coast and inland. Hunters can choose from Atchafalaya Delta (St. Mary Parish), Biloxi (St. Bernard Parish), Manchac (St. John Parish), Maurepas Swamp (St. John Parish), Pass-A-Loutre (Plaquemines Parish), Pointe Aux Chenes (Lafourche, Terrebonne parishes), Salvador (St. Charles Parish) and Sherburne (Iberville, Pointe Coupee, St. Martin parishes).

Most hunting seasons open with youth hunt weekends that precede the adult seasonal opening dates and offer youngsters (under 16 years old) the opportunity to get the first shot at waterfowl and game within a season. Youth waterfowl weekends for the 2007-08 season fall on Nov. 3-4 in the West zone and Nov. 10-11 in the East zone.

Catahoula Lake WMA near Alexandria is an important stop for hundreds of thousands of migratory waterfowl.



LDWF file photo



LDWF file photo

Boeuf WMA
in Caldwell and
Catahoula parishes
offers many
opportunities to
sportsmen, trappers,
fishermen and other
outdoors enthusiasts.

Youth deer hunt weekends are set aside for either sex harvest and differ from area to area and provide young hunters the exclusive firearm hunting privileges to each WMA on those designated dates.

Additionally, special seasonal dates are reserved within each area's deer sea-

son for archery, muzzleloader, still hunting and hunting with dogs.

Lottery hunts on WMAs provide hunters of all ages a controlled access window option for harvesting game with limited hunter numbers on select properties. For 2007-08, lottery opportunities were increased in both the open and youth-only categories.

Youth lottery deer hunts are available at Buckhorn (Tensas Parish), Dewey Wills (Catahoula, LaSalle parishes), Floy McElroy (Richland Parish), Sherburne (Iberville, Pointe Coupee, St. Martin parishes) and Tunica Hills (West Feliciana Parish).

Bayou Pierre WMA (Desoto, Red River parishes) and Sherburne WMA (Iberville, Pointe Coupee, St. Martin parishes) will offer youth waterfowl lottery slots and open lottery slots for all ages.

All lottery hunts require application in advance for a selected number of slots per area.

Announcements and applications for these hunts, and any seasonal hunting news, can be found on the LDWF Web site (www.wlf.louisiana.gov). Season dates and regulations are also published within the 2007-08 Louisiana hunting regulations booklet available at LDWF regional offices and outdoor license vendor locations. 🐾

Bo Boehringer serves as press secretary for the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries and is a frequent contributor to Louisiana Conservationist.

LDWF Provides WMA Wheelchair Confined Hunts

For people that are confined in wheelchairs, enjoying outdoor activities can become more work than play. However, starting this year the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) will offer the physically disabled wheelchair confined people special deer and duck hunts on Louisiana's Wildlife Management Areas (WMA) to help make the outdoors experience a more enjoyable one.

LDWF has just finished building 19 wheelchair specific deer stands on five WMAs and a handful of wheelchair accessible duck blinds on four WMAs.

"For the past couple of years the physically challenged has made it known through our monthly commission meetings, emails and phone calls, that they need more hunting opportunities," said LDWF Physically Challenged Hunt Coordinator Mark Roy. "LDWF has responded to these requests and has made a strong effort to meet the needs for this group of hunters making hunting a reasonable activity that they can enjoy."

For most of the wheelchair-confined deer hunts on WMAs, LDWF has made it possible for the user to drive a vehicle to the stand. On a few WMAs, All Terrain Vehicles (ATV) are required for the more remote locations. Once at the stand, the user can roll the wheelchair right into the custom made 8-by-8-foot ground deer stand.

"All deer stands were built in front of food plots and in restricted areas that have never been hunted," said Roy. "This should be some of the best hunting areas in the state as the hunting pressure has been non-existent in years past. These hunters are in for a great hunting experience this fall."

"We made a conscious effort to schedule hunts on suitable WMAs that

could handle these kind of hunts all over the state so that the wheelchair confined hunters could find a place to hunt that was also close to home," Roy said.

For the upcoming waterfowl season, LDWF has scheduled wheelchair confined hunts on Elbow Slough, Ouachita, Pointe-Aux-Chenes and Sherburne WMAs.

All waterfowl hunts will be conducted via a lottery system where hunters will fill out a lottery form and send it into LDWF for a drawing. Successful applicants will be notified by mail prior to the scheduled waterfowl hunts. Exact dates and times of the hunts were unknown at the time of this printing. Check for information at www.wlf.louisiana.gov/hunting/regulations/wma/lotteryhunts or contact any LDWF district office for date and time information and the lottery forms.

"We decided to use a lottery system for the waterfowl hunts because of the limited number of custom blinds and the expected demand," said Roy. "We felt that we didn't need to use a lottery system for deer season because we think we have an adequate number of stands. Alabama is also doing the same program and they have not had any problems with being overbooked so we should be able to accommodate every interested participant."

To qualify for these hunts, hunters must possess a Class I (Wheelchair Bound) Physically Challenged Hunter's Permit. These permit applications and the list of requirements can be found on LDWF's Web site at www.wlf.louisiana.gov/licenses or at any LDWF district office.

For all of the waterfowl and deer wheelchair confined hunts, participants are allowed to bring a helper. The helper is not allowed to have

Story by

Adam EINCK

firearms, bows or crossbows while in the stand or blind. They can help with anything the wheelchair-confined hunter needs such as retrieving harvested game.

All physically challenged hunter permittees can utilize both regular and handicap ATV trails on all state WMAs. If using an ATV, approved physically challenged hunters must display their Physically Challenged Hunter number in black letters on the gas tank of their ATV.

Roy said the generosity throughout the entire process of constructing the stands has been overwhelming. "All the wood was donated by the Elder Wood Preserving Co. of Mansura. Stines in Lake Charles donated the hardware and nails. We've also received a \$3,500 donation from the Louisiana Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation. I see very little of LDWF's money used for the construction of these blinds and stands," Roy reiterated.

Roy stated that LDWF has made a commitment to provide wheelchair confined hunts for years to come, and hopes for repeat users of the hunts. If an interested participant this year cannot make it to any scheduled hunts, he or she will have plenty of opportunities in the future to take advantage of these hunts.

"For this inaugural year, we will learn a lot about how this program works," said Roy. "At the end of this year we will evaluate the program and make any necessary changes for an even better hunting experience next year."

All deer hunts are scheduled by reservation on a first come first serve basis by calling an LDWF district office. The following are the scheduled deer hunts for the fall/winter 2007-08 hunting season:

Alexander State Forest WMA has four stands available and is located in Rapides Parish: Oct. 20-21, Nov. 3-4 and Nov. 23-25 all of which are either sex hunts. For reservations, call 318-487-5885.

Big Colewa Bayou WMA has four stands available and is located in West Carroll Parish: Nov. 23-25 (either sex), and Nov. 26-Dec. 9 (bucks only). For reservations, call 318-343-4044.

Buckhorn WMA has four stands available and is located in Tensas Parish: Oct. 27-28, Nov. 23-25, Dec. 1-2, 8-9, 29-30, and Jan. 5-6 all of which are either sex hunts. For reservations, call 318-757-4571.

Clear Creek WMA has four stands available and is located in Vernon Parish: Oct. 27-28 (either sex), Oct. 29-Nov. 22 (bucks only), Nov. 23-25 (either sex), and Dec. 15-Jan. 1 (bucks only). For reservations, call 337-497-2576.

Sherburne WMA has three stands available and is located in Pointe Coupee, St. Martin and Iberville parishes: Nov. 23-25, Dec. 14-16 (either sex), and Dec. 29-Jan. 13 (bucks only). For reservations, call 337-948-0255.

The NUMBERS

Results of the 2006-07 Harvest Card Survey

Recent interest in Louisiana for quality deer management and the desire of hunters to see older age bucks in the population moved the department to make changes in the deer program. The legal buck limit has been reduced from a potential of six bucks per season to three bucks per season. Act 841 of the 2004 Louisiana Legislature allowed the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission to establish deer and turkey tagging programs, with a provision that the buck limit be reduced.

During the 2006-07 deer season the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) moved forward with a program that introduced deer hunters to the concept of deer tagging through a harvest card survey. LDWF required deer hunters to submit a harvest card after the season to document their deer kills. The information proved very valuable and was the largest hunter survey — 46,289 responders — that the deer program has achieved in recent years. However, participation was only about 29 percent of the 160,500 deer hunters estimated by the annual mail survey. Below are highlights of the Harvest Card Survey :

Story by

DavidMORELAND

SelenaGARDNER

ScottDURHAM

& MikeOLINDE

Total deer reported	77,233
Hunters who harvested one or more deer-	35,827 (77%)
Hunters who did not harvest a deer	10,462 (23%)
Average number of antlered bucks killed per hunter	0.8
Average number of antlerless deer killed per hunter	0.8
Average number of button bucks killed per hunter	0.1
Average number of deer killed per hunter	1.7
Antlered to antlerless harvest ratio	1:1
Hunters who killed three bucks	5,555 (12%)

The top 20 deer kill parishes were mostly in the central and northwestern parts of the state where there is a high percentage of forested land (Table 1). But also included are the Felicianas and a few parishes in the deltaic plain, where high deer densities occur. The lowest parish harvests, as expected were in the coastal marshes and in the rice prairies of southwestern Louisiana. When comparing the harvest per forested acres, the results are somewhat different (Table 2). Vernon, Natchitoches, Winn, DeSoto, Sabine, Beauregard, Rapides, and Caddo fell out of the top 20, while Tensas, W. Baton Rouge, E. Carroll, Madison, Morehouse, Richland, Avoyelles, and Lafourche were added. So while the large rural pine dominate parishes, for the most part, are at the top of the list for the most deer harvested on a parish wide basis, a number of alluvial valley, deltaic plain, or hardwood dominant parishes appear to produce or carry more deer per acre based on har-

vest data. This gives us an idea of the relative deer density of these parishes. It indicates the different carrying capacities associated with different soil types, and pine vs. hardwood dominant habitats within these parishes. The actual acres per deer kill may not be counted with the harvest card survey alone because of the low reporting rate. There is also some reporting bias likely associated with the returns of the harvest cards. Hunters that killed a deer may have been more likely to turn their cards in than hunters that did not kill a deer. This is why it is so important to continue to try and implement the mandatory harvest reporting associated with the tagging system. With less than 1/3 of deer hunters participating in the harvest card survey, we did not receive the complete data we wanted to get information about at the parish level.

Deer tagging was first established in Louisiana in 1960, at the same time the

Table 1

2006 LDWF Harvest Card Survey Results for Total Deer Harvested by Parish					
Union	4970	Tensas	1427	Terrebonne	585
Bienville	3308	Morehouse	1425	E. Baton Rouge	568
Claiborne	3129	Ouachita	1416	Franklin	513
Vernon	3096	Washington	1351	Calcasieu	481
Bossier	2706	Caldwell	1326	St. Tammany	464
Natchitoches	2640	St. Helena	1271	Assumption	398
Winn	2607	Livingston	1209	Ascension	380
Jackson	2484	LaSalle	1184	St. James	379
DeSoto	2373	Allen	1155	E. Carroll	360
Sabine	2339	Grant	1090	Iberia	316
Webster	2314	Catahoula	986	St. John	250
W. Feliciana	2015	Concordia	974	Cameron	224
Iberville	1846	Madison	966	Jefferson Davis	204
Beauregard	1782	Evangeline	939	Vermillion	184
Lincoln	1775	St. Martin	918	Acadia	180
St. Landry	1767	Tangipahoa	902	Jefferson	113
Rapides	1700	Red River	898	St. Charles	107
Point Coupee	1573	St. Mary	796	W. Carroll	78
E. Feliciana	1525	LaFourche	756	Lafayette	69
Caddo	1516	W. Baton Rouge	680	Plaquemines	37
Avoyelles	1464	Richland	632	St. Bernard	3

2006 LDWF Harvest Card Survey Results Deer Harvest Compared to Forested Area

Table 2

Parish	Harvest	Area (miles ²)	Forested%	Forested Acres
Tensas	1415	603	30	80
W. Feliciana	1991	406	63	82
W. Baton Rouge	678	191	48	87
Point Coupee	1555	557	40	91
St. Landry	1747	929	28	96
Union	4922	878	85	97
E. Carroll	350	421	13	97
Madison	949	624	26	111
Webster	2281	595	75	126
Morehouse	1416	794	36	128
Jackson	2452	570	87	129
Richland	623	559	23	130
Lincoln	1751	471	78	134
E. Feliciana	1519	453	70	134
Avoyelles	1447	832	37	136
Bossier	2666	839	68	138
Bienville	3275	811	87	138
Iberville	1827	619	65	141
Claiborne	3063	755	90	142
Lafourche	734	1085	15	142

Big Game License was created. A hunter was issued tags along with a report card book. Hunters were supposed to send the card back at the end of the deer season and report their harvest. It was hoped that the tagging system would provide much needed harvest information regarding the newly developing herds in the state. Unfortunately hunters did not report their harvest, (similar to the estimated 70 percent that did not return their harvest cards in 2006) and the program did not provide complete harvest data as anticipated. LDWF developed a game harvest survey (mail survey) in 1963 and since then the survey has been used to document deer hunting activities and harvests.

The current license system structure does not provide the exact count of deer hunters due to the many different license types that are available for hunters to purchase. Since all deer hunters will have to obtain tags, an

exact number of deer hunters can be determined. Since hunters will be mandated to report their harvest and obtain a validation number for each kill, information will be obtained at the parish level as to the current harvest of deer. For management purposes it is desirable to know how many deer are being killed in a specific region. Rather than having to wait until the harvest survey is complete, which is usually June, biologists will know as soon as the deer season ends what the deer harvest was and where the deer were killed. Tagging also provides a tool for Enforcement, especially concerning deer limits.

Selena Gardner, Scott Durham and Mike Olinde are employed by the Wildlife Division of the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries. David Moreland is a former biologist and administrator for the department.

Louisiana Celebrates National Hunting and Fishing Day

More than 6,700 people throughout Louisiana celebrated National Hunting and Fishing Day (NHFD) with the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) on Sept. 22 at events in Baton Rouge, Minden, Woodworth and Monroe.

At the Baton Rouge event, almost 1,500 people enjoyed skeet shooting, a catfish pool, youth fishing contest, archery and canoeing among other activities. Once again, the "Paradise Louisiana" outdoors show was on hand to capture the day's events. The wild game tasting booth featured fried alligator, cochon de lait with wild berry barbeque sauce, fried catfish, deer sauce piquant and shrimp salsa.



Photo by Adam Einick

The Baton Rouge event was sponsored in part by the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Foundation, The Advocate, Louisiana Fish Fry, Associated Grocers, Progressive Insurance, Coca-Cola and Roy's Ice. More than 240 volunteers helped with the day's events.



Photo by Adam Einick



Over 3,000 folks made their way to Woodworth's NHFD event. Woodworth's NFHD featured alligator skinning demonstrations and the local LDWF Hunter Education staff provided shooting instructions.

In Minden, more than 1,000 visitors participated in NHFD. The LDWF Hunter Education staff manned the skeet and muzzleloader shooting activities, which were busy all day. Deer skinning demonstrations and fishing instructions also received a lot of attention by the public. Bayou State Bowhunters Association members and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers personnel were there to offer archery lessons.

At the Monroe NHFD activities, over 2,200 people attended a day full of skeet shooting, archery, bait casting lessons, fishing and pony rides. The U.S. National Guard also brought a climbing wall that simulates rock climbing.

At each location, LDWF personnel provided displays and demonstrations to help educate kids and families about different aspects of the outdoors in Louisiana. Other exhibitors were also on hand to demonstrate different hunting and fishing techniques and to provide more information about the state's valuable outdoor resources.

2007
Louisiana's
FISHING

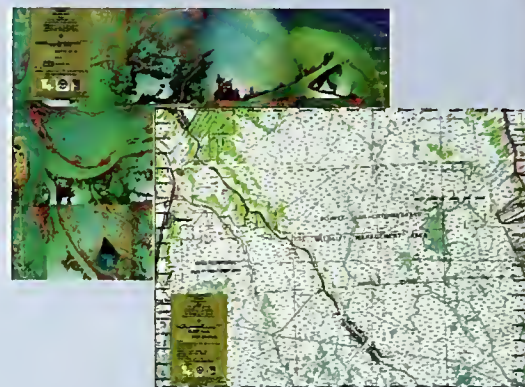


Photo by Adam Einck



Photo by Adam Einck

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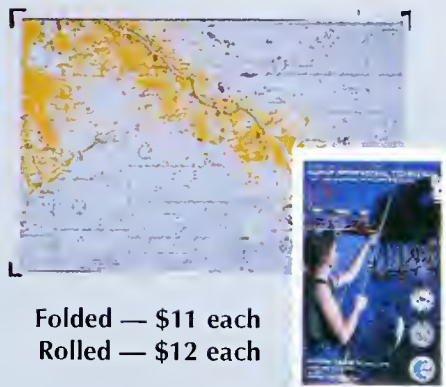
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Our most enchanting posters:
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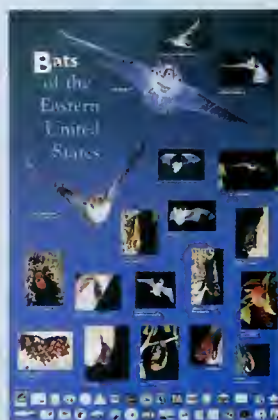
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- #2-Fourchon to Point Au Fer
- #3-Lake Pontchartrain to Chandeleur Sound
- #4-Sabine Pass to White Lake
- #5-White Lake to Atchafalaya Bay
- #6-TX/LA coast to LA/MS coast



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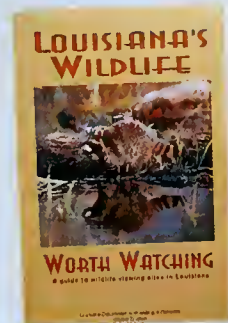
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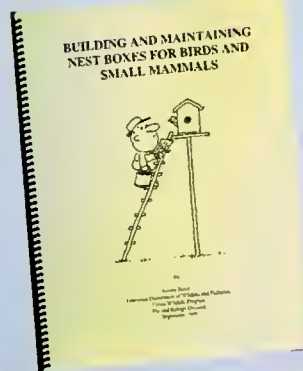
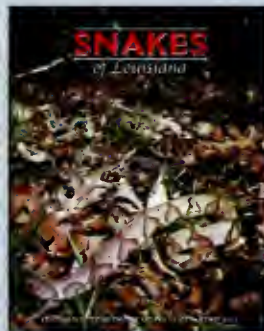
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Item	Quantity	Price	

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Sub-total

Tax (4% for LA residents)

Additional 5% tax for EBR Parish residents

S & H (see chart)

TOTAL amount due

Shipping & Handling Charges

MERCHANDISE	S&H
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TAGGING RULES SUSPENDED BY COMMISSION

THE LOUISIANA WILDLIFE AND Fisheries Commission suspended the rules requiring mandatory deer tagging system for the 2007-08 hunting season at their Sept. 6 meeting and suspended turkey tagging rules at their Oct. 4 meeting.

The commission acted upon a recommendation from the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) to suspend mandatory tagging in light of the citations some hunters may have received, through no fault of their own, during routine documentation checks by Enforcement Division agents in the field.

Complications arose during the development of the deer tag delivery program by the license contractor for the upcoming hunting season.

The license contractor has confirmed that the system has been issuing valid deer tags since Aug. 10. For this reason, and in an effort to collect data from hunters with valid tags issued prior to Aug. 10, LDWF is encouraging all deer hunters with tags to follow these steps (that are now voluntary):

1. Attach the appropriate carcass tag to the deer (either an antlered buck tag or an antlerless deer tag).

2. Document the date of kill on your license in the Deer Harvest Report

Card section.

3. Call the toll-free Harvest Report phone number 1-866-484-4805, as printed on the hunting license, and report the kill within 72 hours OR report through LDWF's Harvest Report website link within 72 hours. The Harvest Report system phone number and web link is scheduled to be activated by Oct. 15. Hunters taking deer in early October will be allowed extra reporting time.

4. Record the validation number on the license as proof of having reported the kill.

For anyone who does not need to purchase a yearly hunting license, including lifetime license holders and hunters under 16 years of age, stop by any point of sale vendor to obtain tags. Hunters under 16 years of age, and without a valid photo ID, will need to present a Social Security card and their SS number will validate tags issued. A valid La. driver's license or state issued ID will suffice for hunter's 16 years old and older in this licensing category.

Please note that possession tags for resident game, printed within the 2007-08 Louisiana Hunting Regulations booklet, will still be required.



Above, Leigh Harris presents Col. Winton Vidrine with the Louisiana Law Enforcement Award. Below, Toby Miller receives his second Litter Enforcement Officer of the Year award.



AGENTS EXCEL IN LITTER ENFORCEMENT

FOR THE SECOND CONSECUTIVE year, Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Sr. Agent Toby Miller received the Keep Louisiana Beautiful Litter Enforcement Officer of the Year award. Miller, a Kentwood resident, accepted the award at the Oct. 4 meeting of the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission.

Keep Louisiana Beautiful Executive Director Leigh Harris presented the award. She thanked Miller for his work and dedication to litter prevention.

Harris also presented Col. Winton Vidrine, head of the LDWF Enforcement Division with the Keep Louisiana Law Enforcement Award, presented to the law enforcement agency that has done the most to promote a clean Louisiana in the previous year. Lt. Col. Jeff Mayne noted that in the past year the division as a whole issued 336 gross litter citations and 478 simple litter citations, more than any other law enforcement agency in the state.

LDWF NAMES NEW WILDLIFE DIVISION ADMINISTRATOR



THE LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT of Wildlife and Fisheries has named Jimmy Anthony as the next Wildlife Division administrator. Anthony has been with LDWF for over 30 years and will take the place of David Moreland, who retired on Sept. 7, 2007.

"I am very honored to have been selected to lead the Wildlife Division. I believe the past 30 plus years of public service in natural resource management has adequately prepared me for this challenge," said Anthony. "I will continue to challenge the Wildlife Division staff for new and innovative approaches to wildlife management and public utilization of those resources."

Anthony received his Bachelor's of Science degree in Wildlife Management and Conservation in 1977 and his Masters of Science degree in Biology in 1979.

Anthony worked in the Monroe area for the first 14 years of his LDWF

career. In 1976, he started as a student worker for LDWF Enforcement Division as a radio dispatcher. He then became a biological aide for the Inland Fisheries Division in 1978, and later in 1978, accepted his first position with the Wildlife Division as a wildlife specialist.

He then became a wildlife management supervisor from 1981 to 1992 when he managed and operated Ouachita WMA. From 1992 to 2000, Anthony served as a biologist on seven WMAs.

In 2000, Anthony made the move to LDWF headquarters in Baton Rouge as he accepted the position of biologist program manager overseeing all Louisiana WMAs. In February of 2007, Anthony took on the Wildlife Division's assistant administrator position.

Anthony is the president of the Louisiana Professional Biologist Association, the Region 4 Southeastern Coordinators representative for the Federal Aid Coordinators Working Group (FACWG) and is the chairman of the FACWG with a full seat on the Wildlife Trust Funds Committee of the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies.

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- I certify that all information furnished in this statement is true and complete. I understand that anyone who furnishes false or misleading information on this form or who omits material or information requested on this form may be subject to criminal sanctions (including fines and imprisonment) and/or civil sanctions (including multiple damages and civil penalties).
- Thomas Gresham,
Executive Director

**For the latest LDWF news,
visit www.wlf.louisiana.gov.**

AGENTS of Change

the evolving role of wildlife and fisheries enforcement agents

2007-08 MIGRATORY WATERFOWL REGULATIONS

By Maj. Wayne Brescher

With migratory hunting seasons fast approaching this is a good time to make sure we are up to date on the season dates, bag limits, shooting hours and all other regulations pertaining to migratory bird hunting.

For the 2007-2008 Dove Season, the state has been divided into north and south zones. The boundary separating the north zone from the south zone begins at the Texas-Louisiana border on La. highway 12; then east along La. highway 12 to its intersection with US highway 190; thence east along US highway 190 to its intersection with interstate 12; thence east along interstate 12 to its intersection with interstate 10; thence east along interstate 10 to the Mississippi State line.

North zone season dates are Sept. 1 -16; Oct. 13 - Nov. 11 and Dec. 15 - Jan. 7.

South zone season dates are Sept 1 - 9; Oct. 13 - Nov. 25 and Dec. 22 - Jan. 7.

Mourning, white-winged and fully dressed Eurasian collared-doves and ringed-turtle doves; daily bag limit 12 in the aggregate, possession 24 in the aggregate but note: there is no bag limit on Eurasian collared-doves or ringed turtle-doves provided that a fully feathered wing

and head remain attached to the carcass of the bird. Fully dressed Eurasian-collared doves and ringed turtle-doves (those without fully feathered wing and head naturally attached to the carcass) shall be included in the aggregate bag limit.

Dove shooting hours and hawking hours are from one half hour before sunrise to sunset except noon to sunset on Sept. 1, 2007. This is new for dove hunters. Only Sept. 1 (Saturday), which is the opening day of dove season in both zones will shooting hours run from noon to sunset.

Teal season opens statewide in Louisiana on Sept. 15 and closes on Sept. 30. Daily bag limit on teal which includes blue-winged, green-winged and cinnamon teal is four and the possession limit is eight. Shooting hours for teal are one-half hour before sunrise to sunset.

Also opening along with teal season on Sept. 15 are king and clapper rails, sora and Virginia rails and gallinule seasons. The seasons for rails and gallinules run Sept. 15 - 30 and Nov. 10 - Jan. 2. The bag limit for King and Clapper Rails is 15 in the aggregate; for Sora and Virginia Rails is 25 in the aggregate and Gallinules is 15 per person daily. Shooting hours for Rails and Gallinules are 30 minutes before sunrise to sunset.

After the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission listened to public comments and Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries personnel comments on the proposed duck season dates and bag limits, it was concluded that a 60-day season would be adopted for ducks and coots. In the west zone, the first segment will open Nov. 10 and close on Dec. 2. The second segment will open on Dec. 15 and run through Jan. 20. In the east zone, the first segment will open on Nov. 17 and run through Dec. 2. The second segment will last from Dec. 15 through Jan. 27.

The daily bag limit on ducks is six and may include no more than four mallards (no more than two of which may be females), two canvas-back, one pintail, three mottled ducks, one black duck, two wood ducks, two scaup and two redheads. The daily bag limit on coots is 15. In addition to the daily bag limits for ducks, the daily bag limit for mergansers is five, only two of which may be hooded mergansers. The possession limit on ducks, coots and mergansers is twice the daily bag limit.

Light geese (snow, blue and Ross's geese) and white-fronted (speckled belly) geese will have a 72 day season. The first segment in the west zone will open Nov. 10 and close Dec. 2. The second segment in

the west zone will open Dec. 15 and close

Feb. 1. The first segment in the east zone will open Nov. 5 and close Dec. 2. The second segment in the east zone will open Dec. 15 and close Jan. 27. The daily bag limit on light geese is 20 with no possession limit. The daily bag limit on white-fronted geese is two with a possession limit of four.

The special-permit-required Canada goose season will be from Jan. 12 through Jan. 27 statewide, except for a small area in southwest Louisiana. The daily bag limit for Canada geese is one and the possession limit is two. The special \$5 permit may be obtained from any license vendor. Be sure to consult the migratory hunting pamphlet for those areas closed to Canada goose hunting.

The Statewide Conservation Order for light geese (snow, blue and Ross's geese) will open in the west zone on Dec. 3, and the first segment will close on Dec. 14. The second segment in the west zone will open on Feb. 2 and close on March 9. The first segment in the east zone will run from Dec. 3-14 and the second segment will be from Jan. 28-March 9. During this time, only snow, blue and Ross geese may be taken and daily bag limit and possession limits are eliminated. The use of electronic calls and unplugged shotguns are permitted. Shooting hours during the order begin one-half hour before sunrise and extend until one half hour past sunset.

Snipe may be taken in the first segment from Nov. 3-Dec. 3 and from Dec. 15-Feb. 28 in

the second segment, with a daily bag limit of eight and a possession limit of 16.

Woodcock may be taken from Dec. 18 to Jan. 31 with a daily bag limit of three and a possession limit of six.

Shooting hours for migratory bird hunting, except for the Conservation Order, are one-half hour before sunrise to sunset, except at the Spanish Lake Recreation Area in Iberia Parish where shooting hours, including the Conservation Order, end at 2 p.m.

Reminder: If you plan to hunt migratory game birds on our wildlife management areas be sure to consult the WMA section of the hunting pamphlet for shooting hours.

Extended falconry dove season is open from Sept. 17-Oct. 9. Extended falconry woodcock season is open from Oct. 28-Dec. 17 and will reopen from Feb. 1-11. The falconry daily bag limit is three and possession limit is six birds for all permitted migratory game birds during the extended falconry and regular hunting seasons.

An extended falconry season for ducks, rails and gallinules will take place from Nov. 3 to Feb. 1.

Any resident waterfowl hunter, age 16 to 59, must carry a valid Louisiana duck license (\$5.50), a federal duck stamp (\$15) signed in ink across the face, and a Louisiana HIP permit (obtained free) and be in possession of a basic hunting license or Louisiana sportsman's paradise license. Lifetime license holders must also have the federal duck stamp and HIP permit. Residents who turned 60 after June 1, 2000 are required to

have a senior hunt/fish license (\$5) along with the federal duck stamp and a HIP permit.

The Migratory Bird Harvest Information Program (HIP) was implemented in 1992. It is a cooperative effort between state agencies and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to improve harvest estimates to make population management decisions. In order for HIP to provide useful and reliable information, a complete listing of migratory bird hunters must be compiled. This ensures that random samples of hunters selected for harvest surveys are representative of all migratory bird hunters and the total number of migratory bird hunters used will result in accurate estimates of total harvest. Therefore, hunter compliance is essential and hunters are required by law to "HIP" certify before hunting migratory birds. This is accomplished by informing the license vendor of your intention to hunting migratory game birds and your desire to "HIP" certify, then answering the questions posed by the vendor about the number of migratory birds harvested the previous season. Upon completion of the questions the vendor will print and present the applicant with proof of HIP certification to be carried along with the required licenses and stamp while hunting.

The following are a list of restrictions hunters should be aware of when hunting migratory game birds.

No person shall take migratory game birds using the following methods:

1. trap, snare, net, rifle, pistol, swivel guns, shotgun larger than 10-gauge, punt gun, bat-

tery gun, machine gun, fish hook, poison, drug, explosive or stupefying substance.

2. shotgun capable of holding more than three shells, unless it is plugged with a one-piece filler which is incapable of being removed without disassembling the gun.

3. from a sink box (a low floating device, having a depression affording the hunter a means of concealment beneath the surface of the water).

4. from or with the aid of a car or other motor driven land conveyance, any aircraft, except that paraplegics and single or double amputees of the legs may take from any stationary motor vehicle or stationary motor driven land conveyance. Paraplegic means an individual affected with paralysis of the lower half of the body, which involves both legs, usually due to disease or injury to the spinal cord.

5. from or by means of any motor boat or sail boat unless the motor has been completely shut off and/or the sail furled, and its forward progress therefore has ceased.

6. by the use or aid of live decoys. All live, tame or captive ducks and geese shall be removed for a period of 10 consecutive days prior to hunting, and confined within an enclosure which substantially reduces the audibility of their calls and totally conceals such tame birds from the sight of migratory waterfowl.

7. using records or tapes of migratory bird calls or sounds, or electrically amplified imitations of bird calls.

8. by driving, rallying, or chasing birds with any motorized conveyance or any sailboat to put them in the range

of the hunter.

9. by the aid of baiting (placing feed such as corn, wheat, salt or other feed to constitute a lure or enticement or on or over any baited area). Hunters should be aware that a baited area is considered to be baited for 10 days after the removal of the bait, and it is not necessary for the hunter to know an area is baited to be in violation.

Youth waterfowl hunting days afford our young people an opportunity to enjoy the sport of waterfowl hunting. Waterfowl hunters ages 15 and younger accompanied by an adult 18 or older may take ducks, geese, mergansers, coots and gallinules on these days. Bag limits are the same as regular duck season. Since goose season will be open in the east zone on youth waterfowl weekend, adults accompanying youth waterfowlers may take geese but may not hunt ducks. Goose season will not be open during youth waterfowl weekend in the west zone. Youth waterfowl weekend in the west zone is Nov. 3-4 and in the east zone Nov. 10-11.

Hunters fortunate enough to take a migratory game bird that has a leg band are encouraged to call the toll free number 1-800-327-BAND (2263). This is a 24-hour number to report migratory bird leg bands. The operator will ask for the band number and how, when and where it was recovered. You will receive a certificate of appreciation with information about the bird. The band is yours to keep.

Bands may also be reported via the Internet at www.reportband.gov

While on the subject of reporting, please report all wildlife violations by calling Operation Game Thief 1-800-442-2511.

In closing I would like to mention hunter ethics and safety. Each year we have to investigate hunting accidents that occur because people don't follow these simple rules:

1. Respect your fellow hunter-don't crowd in and do obey the game laws.

2. Shoot in range and use a retriever to reduce crippling losses.

3. For your safety and that of your friends, always be alert to natural and manmade hazards.

4. Handle guns carefully. Remember, large shotshell pellets carry long distances. Be sure your field of fire is clear of other hunters, dwellings, or domestic animals.

I hope you have a safe and enjoyable hunting season and remember to introduce a young person hunting.

For additional questions regarding migratory hunting seasons, see your 2007-08 migratory waterfowl pamphlet, visit our Web site at www.wlf.louisiana.gov or call your local LDWF office.



Louisiana Seafood Gumbo

2 lbs. Louisiana shrimp
1/2 pt. Louisiana oysters
1 lb. crabmeat
5 Tbsp. cooking oil
3 Tbsp. flour
3 c. chopped okra
2 chopped onions
1 can tomatoes
2 qts. water
1 tsp. salt
1/2 c. finely chopped parsley
1/2 c. finely chopped green onion tops
1 bay leaf
3 minced pods of garlic
several whole, cleaned crabs with claws
salt, black and red pepper

Peel shrimp and de-vein. Make a roux of oil (use half) and flour, stirring constantly until dark brown. Add shrimp to roux and cook for a few minutes. Set aside. Smother okra and onions in oil (use remaining half). Add tomatoes when okra is nearly cooked, then add water, bay leaf, garlic, salt and red pepper. Add shrimp and roux and mix well. Cover and cook slowly for 30 minutes. Add oysters, crabmeat and whole crabs and simmer for 10 to 15 minutes. Add parsley and green onion tops a few minutes before serving over hot cooked rice. Serves 6 to 8.

Wild Duck and Oyster Gumbo

2 pt. Louisiana oysters
2 wild ducks, cut into pieces
1 c. cooking oil
1 c. flour



LDWF File Photo

1 large chopped onion
2 qts. warm water
2 Tbsp. Tabasco
1 Tbsp. minced parsley
1 Tbsp. minced onion tops
salt & black pepper

Make a roux by heating oil and adding flour. Blend well and cook until the flour browns, stirring constantly. Add onions and cook. Season duck well and fry in the roux until oil comes out around the edges.

Add warm water and cook slowly about 2 hours until duck is tender. Season with pepper and salt. Add oysters 20 minutes before serving. Sprinkle next with minced parsley and onion tops.

Chicken-Andouille Gumbo

3 large hen
1 lb. andouille, sliced
1 c. flour
1 c. cooking oil
4 finely chopped onions
4 chopped ribs of celery
1 chopped bell pepper
1 minced clove of garlic
1/2 c. finely chopped green onions
1 Tbsp. finely chopped parsley
2 qts. water
salt & black pepper

Cut up chicken, wash and season with salt and pepper. Make roux with flour and oil until dark brown. Add seasoned chicken and onions and cook over low heat until onions are transparent. Add celery, bell pepper, garlic and andouille. Cover and let simmer for about 30 minutes

stirring often. Add water and increase heat until boiling. Now lower heat to simmer, cover and cook until chicken is tender. About 15 minutes before it is done, add green onions and parsley. Serve over rice.

Summer Preparation of Okra for Winter Gumbo

Buy young fresh okra in the summer and freeze it cooked down, ready for instant winter gumbo by adding seafood and water.

Slice the okra as thin as possible. Heat 2 tablespoons of oil in a large dutch oven or roaster and add okra and 1 tablespoon of vinegar per batch. After cooking for approximately 2 hours for each 2 gallon batch of okra, add 2 large chopped onions, 1 bell pepper and 5 stalks of celery. Use fresh tomatoes if available, or substitute 2 large cans of tomatoes per batch and season with salt, red pepper, Tabasco and Worcestershire sauce to taste. This takes about 3 to 4 hours total cooking time on direct heat. Stir occasionally to keep from sticking. Cook the mixture until the okra has cooked down and is not visible as slices. Freeze.

When ready to use, defrost okra and put in gumbo pot. For 1 quart of okra, add 2 quarts of boiling water. Stir in seafood. Cook approximately 20 minutes, or until seafood is done. Serve over hot steamed rice.

Recipes originally published in Louisiana Conservationist Winter 1978 and Summer 1980 issues.

Curious about nature?

Bobcat
(*Lynx rufus*)



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